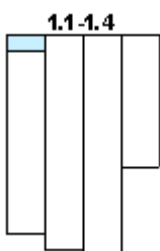


## Yoga Sutras 1.1-1.4:

### What is Yoga? ([Next Main](#))



**Being prepared to start:** To sincerely begin the pursuit of Self-realization is a most significant step in life, when the highest goal of life is taken on as number one on your list of things to do. The first word of the Yoga Sutras is *atha*, which means *now* ([1.1](#)). This particular word for *now* implies a preparedness in arriving at this auspicious stage of desire and commitment towards Self-realization, the highest goal of Yoga.

**Definition of Yoga:** The first four sutras define Yoga, with that definition being expanded upon in the other sutras. In a [systematic](#) process of meditation, you gradually move your attention inward, through all the [levels of your being](#), gaining mastery along the way ([1.2](#)). Eventually you come to rest in your true nature, which is beyond all of those levels ([1.3](#)). This action and the realization of this [center of consciousness](#), is the meaning of *Yoga*.

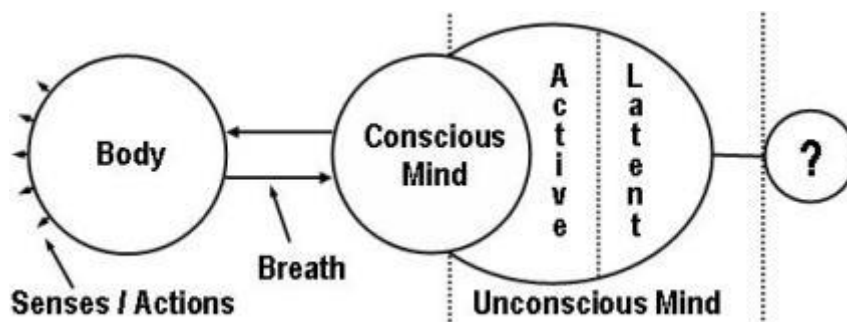


(Yoga Sutra 1.1: Swami Rama)

Yogash chitta vritti nirodhah.  
Tada drashtuh svarupe avasthanam.  
Yoga is the mastery of the activities of the mind-field.  
Then the seer rests in its true nature.

**Knowing what's left after setting aside the obstacles:** There is a fundamental simplicity to the process of Yoga that is outlined in the Yoga Sutras. While the process might appear very complicated when reading the Yoga Sutras and many commentaries, the central theme is one of removing, transcending or setting aside the obstacles, veils or false identities. The many suggestions in the Yoga Sutras are the details or refinements of how to go about doing this. By being ever mindful of this core simplicity it is much easier to systematically progress on the path of Yoga.

**The true Self shines through:** Once the obstacles and false identities have been temporarily set aside, the true Self, which has been there all along, naturally comes shining through ([1.3](#)). The rest of the time, we are so entangled with our false identities that we literally do not see that this misidentification has happened ([1.4](#)). It is the reason that sometimes it is said that we are asleep, and that we need to awaken. That awakening to the Self is the meaning of Yoga.



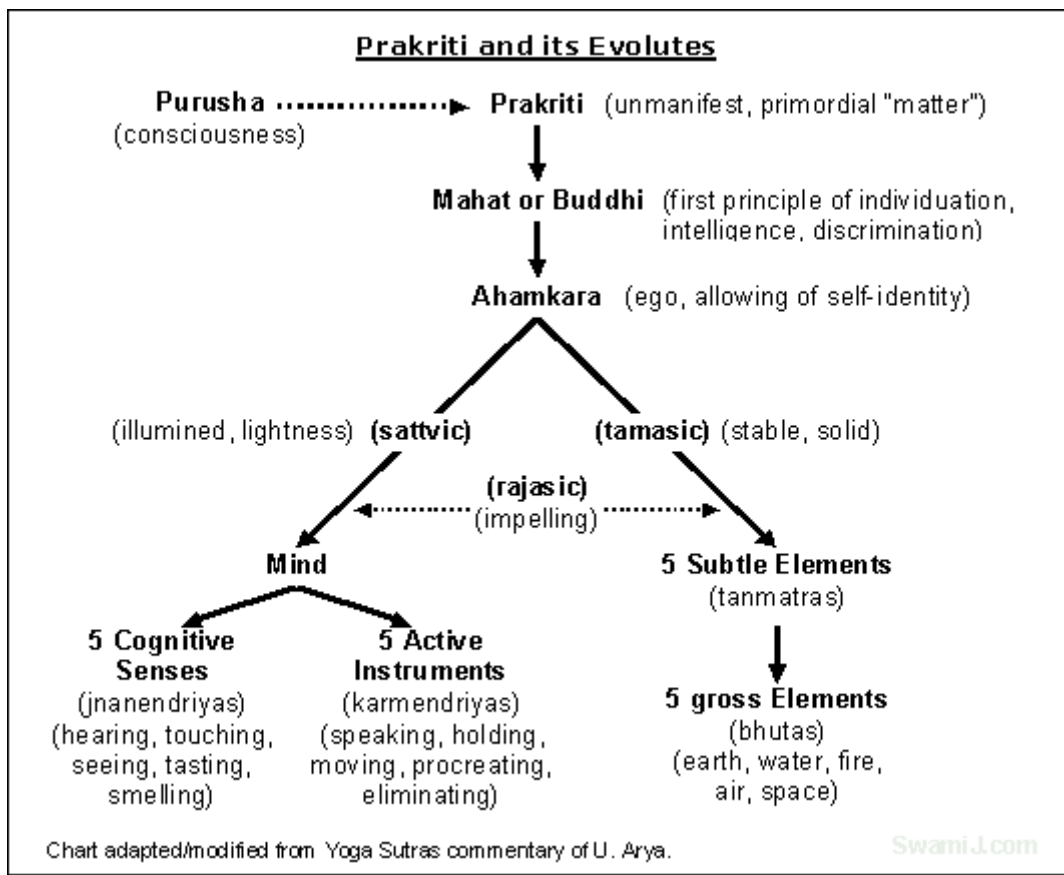
**Like a mirror:** Consciousness looks outward, through the intellect, through the mind, and then through the senses and body. It sees a reflection, like a mirror. It sees reality, a world, a self-identity, which it falsely thinks to be "me" or "mine." Through the forgetting power of *avidya* or ignorance ([2.5](#)), pure consciousness says, "I am *this* or *that*!" This is not all bad, for it gives the opportunity for the joy of awakening, through a journey called *Yoga*, returning to the wholeness that was never really divided in the first place.

**Yoga and Sankhya philosophies:** The process of realization through Yoga rests on the discovery of pure consciousness ([purusha](#)) as separate from all the many false identities, which


are considered to be evolutes of primal matter ([prakriti](#)). These principles of purusha and prakriti are part of the philosophical system known as Sankhya. [Yoga](#) and [Sankhya](#) are two of the six systems of Indian philosophy. See also these articles:

- [Six Schools of Indian Philosophy](#)
- [Sankhya Yoga, Prakriti and Its Evolutes: Returning to Self-Realization](#)
- [Yoga Darshana and the Goal of Seeing Reality](#) (Swami Rama discusses the foundations of Sankhya and the Yoga Sutras)

See the article: [Sankhya Yoga, Prakriti and its Evolutes: Returning to Self-Realization](#)



**Yoga is samadhi:** Both ancient and modern sages, including [Vyasa](#), the most noteworthy commentator on the Yoga Sutra, flatly declare that Yoga is samadhi, the high state of perfected concentration or complete absorption of attention ([3.3](#)). Yoga means union, literally, to yoke, from the root *yuj*, which means to join or to integrate. It means to bring together the aspects of ourselves that were never divided in the first place. It means to attain direct experience of the core of that preexisting holistic being who we truly are at the deepest level, and that is attained through samadhi.

 **See also** the article: [Bindu: Pinnacle of Yoga, Vedanta and Tantra](#)

The goal of Yoga is Yoga, period. ([more](#))

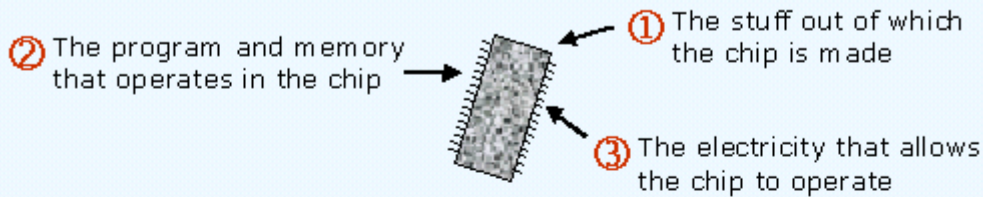
**Yoga is not:** Yoga is *not* merely physical fitness, stress management, medical treatment, or a means of manifesting money, although authentic Yoga is definitely beneficial to many aspects of life. The goal of Yoga is Yoga, period.

**See also** the article: [Modern Yoga versus Traditional Yoga](#)

**Introduction article:** It is useful to read the [Introduction to the Yoga Sutras](#) page, which describes several approaches to exploring the Yoga Sutras pages of this website.

### Self-Realization and the Microchip

There are three basic "parts" in relation to a microchip:



There are also three basic "parts" in relation to a human being:

- 1) **Stuff:** The basic "stuff" (prakriti) out of which all of the subsequent levels of our being are constructed or manifested
- 2) **Manifestations:** The outward manifestation of that basic "stuff," like the program and memory in the microchip, including individuality, intelligence, mind, senses, and the building blocks of earth, water, fire, air, and space, along with countless combinations and permutations of all of these
- 3) **Consciousness:** The pure, untainted, eternal consciousness (purusha), which flows through the entire matrix of activity of actions, speech and thought, like the unadulterated electricity that flows through the microchip

**Experiencing the Self:** Self-Realization is the state of knowing ourselves as "electricity," the pure consciousness that allows all of the surface levels of our being to operate. There is no "I" as a composite of personality, program or memory, which is itself attaining or gaining something new. Rather, it is the Realization of that core Self, which is beyond all of those countless false identities, as unique and beautiful as those may be.

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## Swami Rama on the Yoga Sutras (The Video below is the 1st of 85 videos)

([Click here for all 85 videos; about 13 hours - external site](#))

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1.1 Now, after having done prior preparation through life and other practices, the study and practice of Yoga begins.  
(*atha yoga anushasanam*)

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- *atha* = now, at this auspicious moment; implying the transition to this practice and pursuit, after prior preparation; implying a blessing at this moment of transition
- *yoga* = of yoga, union; literally, to yoke, from the root *yuj*, which means *to join* or *to integrate*; same as the absorption in *samadhi*
- *anu* = within, or following tradition; implies being subsequent to something else, in this case, the prior preparation
- *shasanam* = instruction, discipline, training, teaching, exposition, explanation; *Shas* implies the imparting of teaching that happens along with discipline



(Yoga Sutra 1.1: Swami Rama)

See also the article:

[Now, Then, and Therefore Yoga Discipline is Being Explained](#)

(Swami Rama on Yoga Sutra 1.1)

**Yoga comes after preparation:** This introductory sutra suggests that after our many actions in life, and whatever preparatory practices we might have performed, now, we are finally ready to pursue the depths of self-exploration, the journey directly to the [center of consciousness](#), Atman, or Self, our eternal and True identity.

**Discipline and learning:** To practice Yoga requires cultivating discipline and following a systematic method of learning (anushasanam). This has more to do with the *quality* or *conviction* in one's practices than it has to do with the *quantity*. This is described in greater detail in sutras [1.21 and 1.22](#).

**Five states of mind:** In describing this sutra, the sage [Vyasa](#) names five states of mind, of which the one-pointed (ekagra) ([1.32](#)) state of mind is the desired state of mind for the practice of Yoga. These five states of mind range from the severely troubled mind to the completely mastered mind. (These five are also described in the [five states section of the Witnessing](#) article.)



- Kshipta/disturbed
- Mudha/dull
- Vikshipta/distracted
- Ekagra/one-pointed
- Nirodhah/mastered

To *position* the five states of mind on the fingers is a good way of learning to remember them.

**Know where you are:** It is very useful to be aware of these stages, both in the moment, and as a general day-to-day level at which one is functioning. It reveals the depth of practice that one might be able to currently practice. Some aspect of yoga meditation applies to every human being, though we need to be mindful of which is most fitting and effective for a person with this or that state of mind.

**Two of the states are desirable:** Of the *five* states of mind (described below in more detail), the later *two* (one-pointed and mastered) are most desirable for the deeper practice of yoga meditation. For most people, our minds are usually in one of the first *three* states (disturbed, dull, or distracted). To deal with the troubled mind and the lethargic mind is progress, leading one to a merely distracted mind, from where one can more easily work on training the mind in one-pointedness.

**Stabilize the mind in one-pointedness:** By knowing this, we can deal with our minds so as to gradually stabilize the mind in the *fourth* state, the state of one-pointedness (Note that this use of the phrase *fourth state* is different from that used in relation to the fourth state of [turiya](#)). This is the state of mind which prepares us for the *fifth* state, in which there is mastery of mind. (The first two states might also be dominant or intense enough that they manifest as what psychologists call mental illness.)

Knowing where your mind is now  
tells you how to get where you're going.

**1. Kshipta/disturbed:** The kshipta mind is disturbed, restless, troubled, wandering. This is the least desirable of the states of mind, in which the mind is troubled. It might be severely disturbed, moderately disturbed, or mildly disturbed. It might be worried, troubled, or chaotic. It is not merely the distracted mind (Vikshipta), but has the additional feature of a more intense, negative, emotional involvement.

**2. Mudha/dull:** The mudha mind is stupefied, dull, heavy, forgetful. With this state of mind, there is less of a running here and there of the thought process. It is a dull or sleepy state, somewhat like one experiences when depressed, though we are not here intending to mean only clinical depression. It is that heavy frame of mind we can get into, when we want to do nothing, to be lethargic, to be a couch potato.

The *Mudha* mind is barely beyond the *Kshipta*, disturbed mind, only in that the active disturbance has settled down, and the mind might be somewhat more easily trained from this place. Gradually the mind can be taught to be a little bit steady in a positive way, only occasionally distracted, which is the *Vikshipta* state. Then the mind can move on in training to the *Ekagra* and *Nirodhah* states.

**3. Vikshipta/distracted:** The Vikshipta mind is distracted, occasionally steady or focused. This is the state of mind often reported by students of meditation when they are wide awake and

alert, neither noticeably disturbed nor dull and lethargic. Yet, in this state of mind, one's attention is easily drawn here and there. This is the *monkey mind* or *noisy mind* that people often talk about as disturbing meditation. The mind can concentrate for short periods of time, and is then distracted into some attraction or aversion. Then, the mind is brought back, only to again be distracted.

The *Vikshipta* mind in daily life can concentrate on this or that project, though it might wander here and there, or be pulled off course by some other person or outside influence, or by a rising memory. This *Vikshipta* mind is the stance one wants to attain through the foundation yoga practices, so that one can then pursue the one-pointedness of *Ekagra*, and the mastery that comes with the state of *Nirodhah*.

**4. Ekagra/one-pointed:** The Ekagra mind is one-pointed, focused, concentrated (Yoga Sutra [1.32](#)). When the mind has attained the ability to be one-pointed, the real practice of Yoga meditation begins. It means that one can focus on tasks at hand in daily life, practicing karma yoga, the yoga of action, by being mindful of the mental process and consciously serving others. When the mind is one-pointed, other internal and external activities are simply not a distraction.

The ability to focus attention is a primary skill for meditation and samadhi.

The person with a one-pointed mind just carries on with the matters at hand, undisturbed, unaffected, and uninvolved with those other stimuli. It is important to note that this is meant in a positive way, not the negative way of not attending to other people or other internal priorities. The one-pointed mind is fully present in the moment and able to attend to people, thoughts, and emotions at will.

The one-pointed mind is able to do the practices of concentration and meditation, leading one onward towards samadhi. This ability to focus attention is a primary skill that the student wants to develop for meditation and samadhi.

**5. Nirodhah/mastered:** The Nirodhah mind is highly mastered, controlled, regulated, restrained (Yoga Sutra [1.2](#)). It is very difficult for one to capture the meaning of the *Nirodhah* state of mind by reading written descriptions. The real understanding of this state of mind comes only through practices of meditation and contemplation. When the word *Nirodhah* is translated as controlled, regulated, or restrained, it can easily be misunderstood to mean suppression of thoughts and emotions.

To suppress thoughts and emotions is not healthy and this is not what is meant here. Rather, it has to do with that natural process when the mind is one-pointed and becomes progressively more still as meditation deepens. It is not that the thought patterns are not there, or are suppressed, but that attention moves inward, or beyond the stream of inner impressions. In that deep stillness, there is a mastery over the process of mind. It is that mastery that is meant by *Nirodhah*.

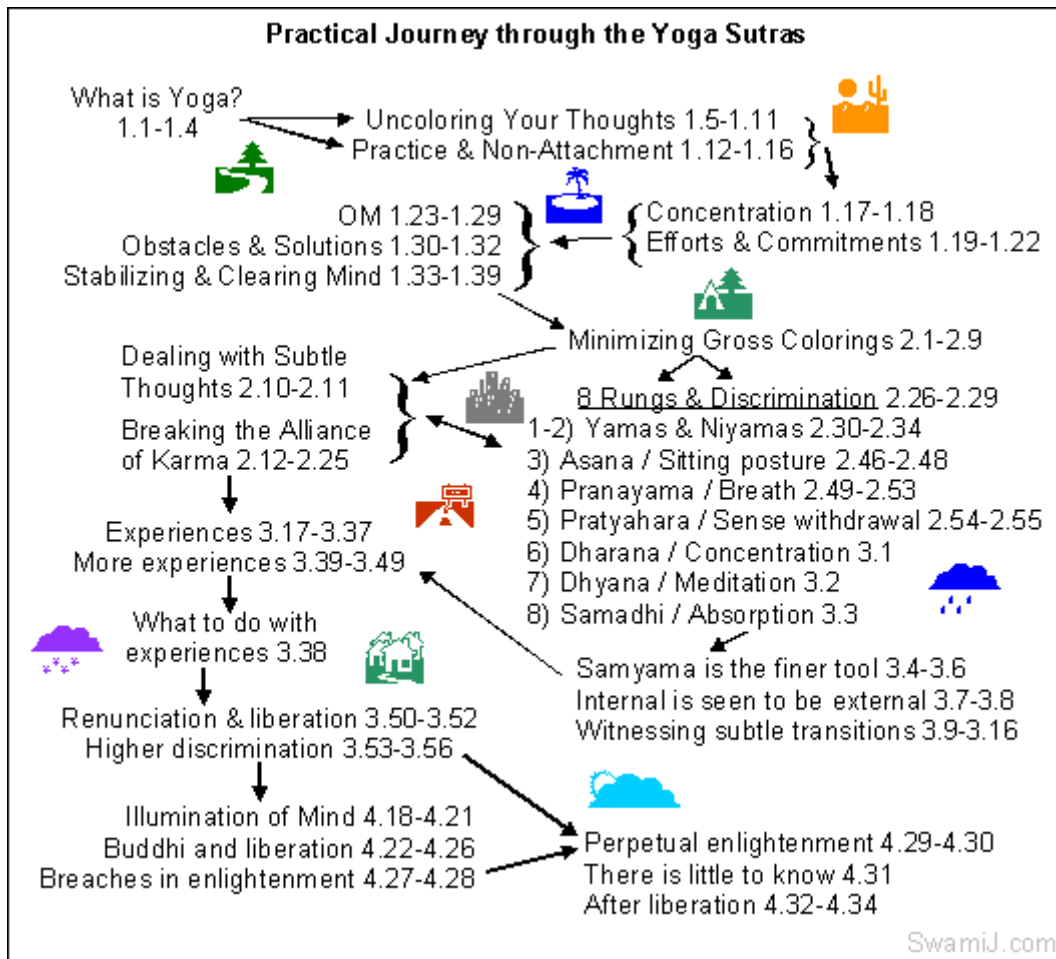
In the second sutra of the Yoga Sutras (the sutra below), Yoga is defined as "*Yogash Chitta Vritti Nirodhah*," which is roughly translated as "Yoga is the control [nirodhah] of the thought patterns of the mind field." Thus, this *Nirodhah* state of mind is the goal and definition of Yoga. It is the doorway by which we go beyond the mind.

### **Transitions: New Years and New Moments in Life and Meditation**

The transition from one year to the next year happens in an infinitely short moment that is actually non-existent in time. So too, there are transitions in the moments of life and the moments of meditation. Mindfulness of transitions in daily life and during meditation time is extremely useful on the spiritual journey to enlightenment. The recording ends with a 15-minute guided contemplative meditation on Transitions, which begins at 54:42.

Podcast Date: Dec 30, 2006 Length 1:09:25





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1.2 Yoga is the control (nirodhah, regulation, channeling, mastery, integration, coordination, stilling, quieting, setting aside) of the modifications (gross and subtle thought patterns) of the mind field.

(yogash chitta vritti nirodhah)

- yoga = of yoga, union; literally, to yoke, from the root *yuj*, which means *to join*; same as the absorption in samadhi
- chitta = of the consciousness of the mind-field
- vritti = operations, activities, fluctuations, modifications, changes, or various forms of the mind-field
- nirodhah = control, regulation, channeling, mastery, integration, coordination, understanding, stilling, quieting, setting aside of

**Nirodhah suggests self-training:** This single sentence is a most succinct definition of the science of Self-realization, or Yoga. The key to understanding is the word *nirodhah*, which defies translation or description. When translated poorly or misunderstood, it can sound like the suppression or repression of thoughts and emotions, which is definitely not what Yoga is about. Rather, it has to do with a process more like coordinating and setting aside what is not significant or not-self (2.5). It means finding the jewel of Truth that is *underneath* or *behind* all of the other activities in the mind-field. This comes through a self-training program dealing with the [relationships, senses, body, breath, and mind](#). Ultimately, the meaning of *nirodhah*, and thus, of Yoga itself begins to emerge experientially through doing the practices.

**Nirodhah is the most desired of five states of mind:** The sage [Vyasa](#) names five states of mind, of which the *nirodhah* state of mind is the desired state of mind for the realization of the true Self. These five states of mind are described just above in the discussion of Sutra 1.1. It is extremely useful to be mindful of the five states of mind, so as to better understand their relationship to this most desired state of mind.

**Uncoloring your thoughts:** To find the jewel of the Self requires getting past the coloring of thought patterns (1.5), such as attachment, aversion, and fear (2.3). This involves [witnessing your own inner process](#).

**Practice and non-attachment:** Two principles remain at the core throughout this self-training program: 1) Practices leading to stability and tranquility and 2) non-attachment. (1.12-1.16)



**Attitudes, efforts, and commitments:** Five attitudes, efforts, and commitments are cultivated: faith in your direction, energy to go there, mindfulness and memory to stay there, and the ongoing commitment to seek the higher states of concentration and wisdom. (1.20)

**Stabilizing and clearing the mind:** Preparatory practices including meditation on attitudes towards people and ways to focus attention, are done to train the mind so that the subtler meditations can then be practiced. (1.33-1.39)

**Reducing the gross colorings of mind:** The more gross colorings of mind, dealing mostly with attractions, aversions, and fears are reduced through a process of training the senses, inner study, and surrender. (2.1-2.9)

**Discrimination through eight rungs:** Cultivating [inner discrimination](#) through the eight rungs of yoga (2.26-2.29), so as to systematically uncover that jewel of the Self. (1.3)

**Mind becomes like a transparent crystal**

When the mind is clouded it cannot clearly see the objects in the field of mind or the objects of the world. It is like a clouded crystal, or a stone that is of solid coloring.

As the mind becomes clearer and clearer through the meditation practices of yoga, that mind becomes like a transparent crystal. A transparent crystal will take on the coloring of any object it comes near. (See Yoga Sutras 1.41-1.43)

When such a clear mind focuses on an object in the mind field, it becomes totally absorbed in that object, allowing you to see the nature of that object very clearly. You systematically explore, encounter, examine, and gradually set aside with non-attachment the many false identities, attractions, aversions, and fears. This introspection is done not only at the grosser levels of mind, but also the subtler, which is the storehouse of the deep impressions, samskaras that drive karma. (See Yoga Sutras 1.2-1.4 and 2.1-2.25)

That transparent-crystal-like mind can eventually transcend absorption of all of the objects of the mind, leaving behind even the levels of samadhi on objects. The mind turns inward and surrenders itself into the direct experience of that which is beyond the mind.

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## The "Seer" Beyond the Mind (Video on Yoga Sutras 1.2-1.3) ([More Videos by Swami Jnaneshvara](#))

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1.3 Then the Seer abides in Itself, resting in its own True Nature, which is called Self-realization.  
(tada drashtuh svarupe avasthanam)

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- tada = then, at that time; at the time of concentration and meditation
- drashtuh = the seer's, of the soul, witness, Atman, Self; from the root *drsh*, which means *to see* (It is significant to note that Patanjali is not trying to define who is the seer, or the nature of that seer. This is left to be answered or resolved in direct experience.)
- svarupe = in its own nature, own form or essence; (sva = own; rupa = form)
- avasthanam = stability, settling, remaining, being in a state, resting, standing, lying, abiding; the root *stha* means *to stand*

**Then the Self stands alone:** As a result of having done the process of *nirodhah*, described in the last sutra, the true Self stands alone, unencumbered by our many false identities (described in the next sutra). This standing alone process is why the phrase Self-realization uses the word *realization*, rather than a word like *attainment*. The process is not one of attaining something we do not have, but rather is one of [removing the clouds](#), so as to see the light that is already there.

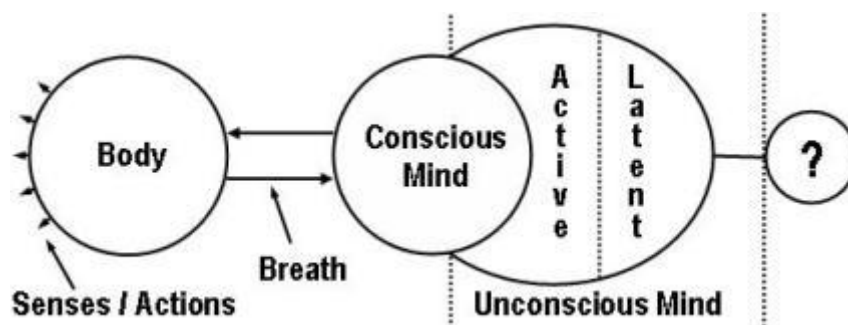


The wave forgets the truth that it is ocean, thinking itself  
to be the grand shape, which it has temporarily taken.  
For a while, it takes on the rupa (form) of wave.  
Finally, it remembers its true rupa (form) of ocean.  
The two coexist, though one is true, and the  
other, though beautiful, is only relatively true.  
So too, we humans forget our true nature,  
but, through yoga, can remember.

**Awareness remains unchanged:** In deep meditation, you come to see that while the thought patterns shift here and there, ever changing their shape, the way that the waves on the ocean keep shifting, the awareness itself never changes. There is a constant, ever flowing, ever being awareness that simply is, that observes or witnesses. In meditation, this same truth is realized over and over, as layer after layer, level after level of mental process is revealed and seen to be like the deeper shifting of the ocean waves. The awareness itself remains unchanged, and will become clearer and clearer as the [center of consciousness](#) that stands alone, though part of [all the levels](#) it permeates.

**The seer:** The word *drashtuh* means *seer* or *witness*. The word *seer* does not give you a theological or metaphysical description or definition of who you are. This is one of the beautiful qualities of Yoga and the Yoga Sutras. There is nothing in the word *seer* to believe or not believe. By saying that the *seer* rests in its true nature after transcending the many forms of thought patterns in the mind field ([1.3](#)), one can simply do the purifying practices and personally experience the results. In English translations, the word *drashtuh* is often given meanings such as Self, Soul, or Atman (such as in the translations above). This provides some clarity or speculation of the nature of this *seer*, but it is useful to remember that [Patanjali](#) is not actually telling you what is the nature of your true self, but that the *seer* will be experienced in itself, in its true nature, whatever or however that is ultimately experienced and described by each person.





**Experiencing the seer in its own nature:** Similarly, the word *svarupe* means in *its own nature*. Here also, [Patanjali](#) is not giving a definition of your true nature. Once again, there is nothing to believe or not believe. Through practice and non-attachment ([1.12-1.16](#)) and transcending the many mistaken identities ([1.4](#), [2.5](#)), you come to the direct experience of *your own nature*. Yet, most of us are curious and want to hear or read about the descriptions of this *true nature*, leading us to speak of, and to describe Self, Soul, or Atman, etc.. While we use, describe, and discuss these terms it is, again, most useful to keep in mind that Yoga actually refers to it simply as the *seer*, which is resting in its *true nature*, allowing direct experience to reveal what this is.

See also the article: [Bindu: Pinnacle of Yoga, Vedanta and Tantra](#)

**Consciousness withdraws from a series of instruments**

When we speak of the stages of meditation, it can appear that "I" am a discrete traveler, and that "I" am traveling from one location to the next, like stepping from one stone to another when crossing a stream. This is not actually how meditation works. Consciousness has progressively moved outward through a series of instruments, like telescopes, so as to experience the external world. The journey of meditation reverses this process by systematically withdrawing attention from those telescope-like instruments, allowing attention to rest in its pure, formless form, its True Nature.

- Senses are instruments that bring experience inward to the Mind.
- Mind is an instrument that brings experience inward to the Intelligence.
- Intelligence is an instrument that brings experience to the Individual.
- Individuality allows Consciousness to experience itself as an experienter.

The seer is engaged with the world through the instruments.

Senses are then withdrawn from the objects.

Mind is then withdrawn from the senses.

Intelligence is then withdrawn from the mind.

Individuality withdraws from intelligence, now standing alone.

Individuality surrenders into Consciousness, as the Seer knows its True Nature.

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**Purusha and Prakriti:** The process of realization through Yoga rests on the discovery of pure consciousness ([purusha](#)) as separate from all the many false identities, which are considered to be evolutes of primal matter ([prakriti](#)). These principles of purusha and prakriti are part of the

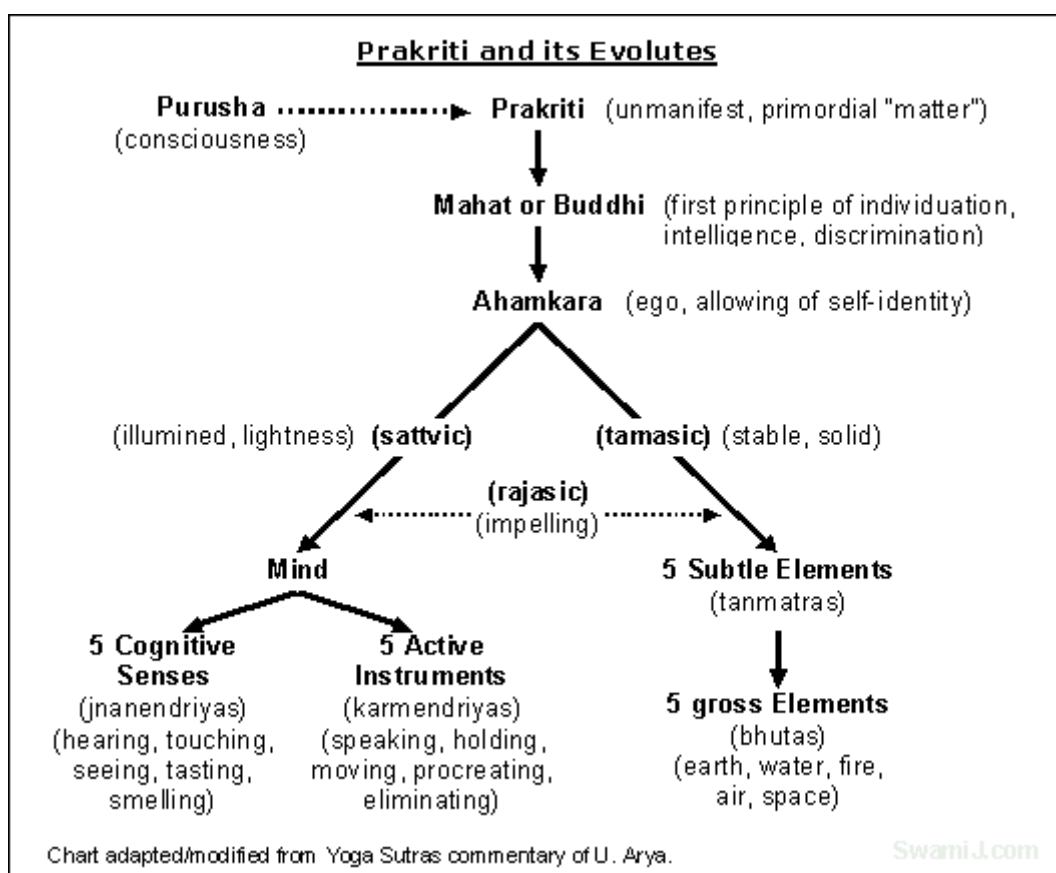
philosophical system known as Sankhya. [Yoga](#) and [Sankhya](#) are two of the six systems of Indian philosophy. See also these **articles**:

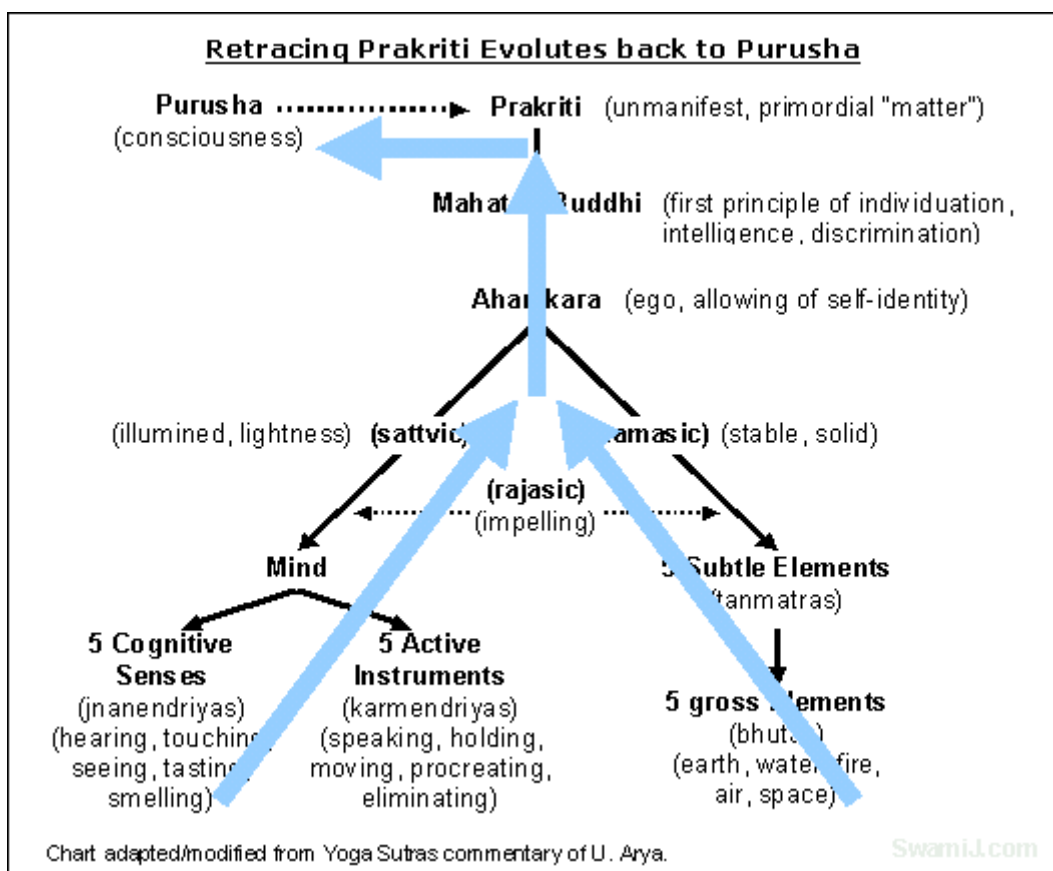
- [Six Schools of Indian Philosophy](#)
- [Prakriti and Its Evolutes: Returning to Self-Realization](#)

See the article: Sankhya Yoga, Prakriti and its Evolutes: Returning to Self-Realization

**Discriminating between Purusha and Prakriti:** The entire process of Yoga rests on discriminating between Purusha and the false identities of Prakriti. While this process of discrimination permeates the whole of the Yoga Sutras, the following three clusters of sutras will clarify the way discrimination relates to practices and realization:

- The 8 rungs and discrimination ([2.26-2.29](#))
- Higher discrimination ([3.53-3.56](#))
- Buddhi and liberation ([4.22-4.26](#))





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1.4 At other times, when one is not in Self-realization, the Seer appears to take on the form of the modifications of the mind field, taking on the identity of those thought patterns. (vritti sarupyam itaratra)

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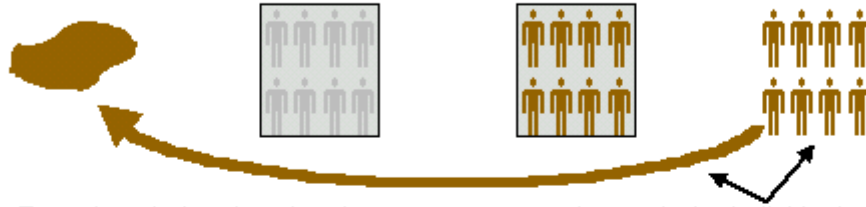
- vritti = of the operations, activities, fluctuations, modifications, changes, or various forms (of the mind-field)
- sarupyam = similarity, assimilation, appearance of, identification of form or nature, conformity with the shape of; the root *sa* means with, and *rupa* means *form*
- itaratra = elsewhere, at other times, when not in that state of realization above

**When we are *not* aware of our true nature:** When activity of all levels of mind have been transcended (1.2), we experience pure consciousness (1.3). However, the rest of the time, mind flows towards the many sensory experiences we have, as well as towards the streams of memories and fantasies. The existence of the external world and the memories is not the problem. Rather, the pure consciousness mistakenly takes on the *identity* of those thought patterns. In this way, we incorrectly come to think that *who we are* is one and the same with these thoughts. The solution is to separate the seer and the seen (2.17), the experiencer and the object experienced, and this is the theme and practice of Yoga.

## Chocolate Bars and Yoga Sutras 1.2-1.4

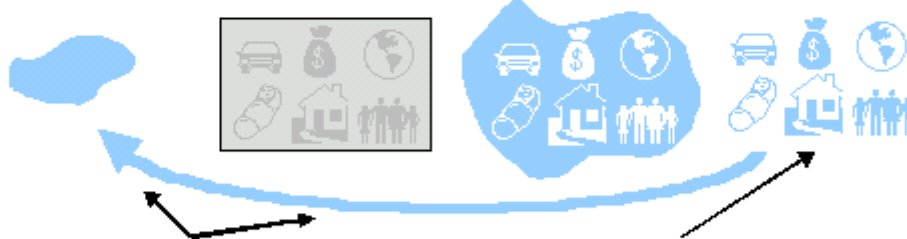
Yoga is the control (nirodhah, regulation, channeling, mastery, integration, coordination, stilling, quieting, setting aside) of the modifications (gross and subtle thought patterns) of the mind field (1.2). Then the Seer abides in Itself, resting in its own True Nature, which is called Self-realization (1.3). At other times, when one is not in Self-realization, the Seer appears to take on the form of the modifications of the mind field, taking on the identity of those thought patterns (1.4).

Take formless melted chocolate.      Get a chocolate candy bar mold.      Pour and cool the chocolate.      You get shaped chocolate bars.



Even though the chocolate bar now appears to be particular individual shapes, it remains nothing other than the chocolate that it was all along.

Consciousness is also formless, like the hot chocolate.      Memories or sensed objects are stored in the mind.      Consciousness wraps around those objects.      We mistakenly think these objects are "who I am."



Yoga Sutras 1.2-1.3: When we see clearly, we rest in our true nature of pure consciousness. We remember our Self in direct experience.

Yoga Sutra 1.4: Without that clarity, we take on the false identities of the impressions of the mind field. We forget, and think these are "who I am."

Initially, this process of seeing clearly might relate to gross objects, such as what we all conventionally think of as memory. However, we gradually come to see that we have also become falsely identified with the subtler instruments with which we are able to experience, such as the instruments of cognition (the senses), or subtle building blocks of self-identity like earth, water, fire, air, and space, as well as the subtle energy flows. These are further described in later Sutras, such as those in Chapter 3.

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**Consciousness wraps around mental objects:** When a metal sculptor wants to make a mold, he might first make a plaster statue, then form the clay mold around that statue. Later, that clay becomes the mold for pouring the liquid metal. The process of the clay taking the form of the original plaster model is the meaning of the seer or Self appearing to take on the form of the thought pattern stored in the mind-field. When pure consciousness *wraps itself* around the mental object it encounters, it only *appears* to take on the identity of that object. It is a sort of mistaken identity that results.

**Gold and clay:** Gold is melted, reformed, and fashioned into many different ornaments. Yet, it remains gold. Clay is pushed and pulled and twisted, and shaped into many different bowls or other objects. Yet, it remains clay. However much consciousness shapes itself into the many objects stored in the mind field, that consciousness remains pure, standing alone. That consciousness, itself lacking any form, is described as having the nature of existence, consciousness, and bliss.

**It is always a mental object:** The object around which consciousness wraps itself is always an inner, mental object, even though there may be an external object being perceived through the senses ([indriyas](#)). If you see and smell your favorite food (or most offensive object), it is the *memory* of that experience, the *mental* object that is being triggered and brought to the surface. Even if you have never experienced this particular object before, it is presented through the eyes and nose (and other senses) to the mind field, as if on a movie screen, which the seer can then watch. The experience itself is between the inner witness and the presented object, and that

presented object might come either through the senses or memory (or subtle realm, internal awareness). The significance of this is that we need to work with our inner awareness in relation to mental objects. In other words, we need to train our own mind and senses.

**Five forms of mental objects:** The five types of thought patterns that result from this false identity (of the Seer taking on false identities) are described in sutras [1.5-1.11](#). How to release consciousness from these few categories of mistaken identity is the process of enlightenment, and is the subject of the Yoga Sutras.

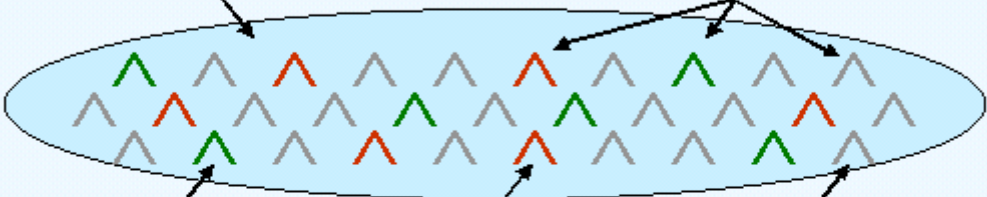
**Change your Inner Dialogue from "I want" to "It wants"**

When likes or dislikes arise from the lake of the mind, we may say or think words like, "I want this or that," or "I don't like this or that." However:

It is not the **"I"** who wants this or that.  
It is the **"It"** that wants this or that.

It is the individual thought pattern **itself**, the deep impression or habit pattern in the mind field, which desires to fulfill its attraction or aversion.

The "Lake" of the mind, "Chitta" Thought patterns (Vrittis) are like Waves or Whirlpools in the Lake of Mind called "Chitta"



Some of the Vrittis are colored with attraction or attachment. Some of the Vrittis are colored with dislike or aversion. Some of the Vrittis are neutral, not colored, and are just memories.

Yoga explains that the reason for not experiencing the state of Self-realization is that pure consciousness identifies itself with the deep thought patterns (Vrittis) of the mind-field (Chitta; see Yoga Sutras 1.2-1.4):

The problem is that **"I"** identifies with all the Vrittis (thought patterns),  
and each of them is an **"It"** that is not really who **"I"** am.

To see that it is the Vrittis (not "I") that are colored with attraction, aversion, and fear is a crucial step in the path of Self-realization. One of the easiest, most straightforward ways to begin to correct this misunderstanding is:

Stop saying, **"I"** want,  
Start saying, **"It"** wants.

We are definitely responsible for those many individual thoughts, and their resulting speech and actions, but those thoughts are not "who I am." As meditation progresses, the colorings of attractions and aversions gradually weaken, as the real "I," the True Self more clearly shines through.

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[The next sutra is 1.5](#)